

Message Text

SECRET

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43

ACTION SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /031 W

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R 081154Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3068

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

S E C R E T BANGKOK 7460

EXDIS

DEPT PLEASE PASS CINCPAC, USSAG

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS : MASS, EAID, ETRN, CB

SUBJECT : COMMERCIAL CONTRACTS TO REPLACE RELIANCE ON USAF
C-130S

REF: A. PHNOM PENH 6390

B. PHMOM PENH 3145

1. WE FULLY APPRECIATE DESIRABILITY OF FINDING SOME VIABLE
SUBSTITUTE FOR USAF AIR DELIVERY IN CAMBODIA TO REDUCE
EXPOSURE OF USAF AIRCRAFT AND CREWS TO ENEMY ACTION. WE
WERE DISAPPOINTED THAT EARLIER PLANS FOR ARRANGING IN-COUNTRY
RICE DELIVERY (REF B) WERE NEVER CONSUMMATED.

2. IN CONSIDERING ALTERNATIVE POSSIBILITIES, WE SUGGEST
APPROACHING PROPOSAL FOR COMMERCIAL AIR DROPS BY THAI-BASED
FIRM WITH GREAT CAUTION. FROM OUR VIEW DEAL WITH ANY CAMBODIA-
BASED AIRLINE WOULD BE PREFERABLE. IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE FOR US
TO GET RTG ACQUIESCENCE FOR SOME QUALIFIED FIRM (SUCH AS
CONTINENTAL AIR SERVICES INC. OR BIRD) WITH EXPERIENCE IN
THE AREA TO UNDERTAKE OPERATIONS WITHIN CAMBODIA, E.G., EX
BATTAMBANG, WHILE UTILIZING THAI BASES FOR HEAVY MAINTENANCE.
HOWEVER WE DO NOT CONSIDER IT LIKELY THAT THAI-AM, THAI
AIRWAYS OR ANY OTHER QUASI-RTG FIRM WOULD BE PREPARED TO TAKE
CONSPICUOUS ROLE IN DIRECT AND DANGEROUS SUPPORT FOR GKR

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ENCLAVES.

3. IN CONVERSATION WITH AMBASSADOR MAY 7 O PROPOSED USAID
CAMBODIA OFFICE IN BANGKOK, DEFENSE MINISTER THAWI REFLECTED
GREAT CONCERN LEST EVEN USG PERSONNEL STATIONED IN BANGKOK
WOULD BY IMPLICATION TIE RTG TOO CLOSELY TO GKR SUPPORT.
WE FEAR THIS REFLECTS SPREADING DESIRE WITHIN RTG HIGH COUNCILS
TO DISASSOCIATE SELVES FROM IDENTIFICATION WITH LON NOL REGIME.
WE WILL WATCH FOR OTHER SIGNS FO ANY SUCH ADVERSE DEVELOPMENT,
BUT WOULD NOT WISH TO STIMULATE REACTION BY SEEKING HIGH-LEVEL
COMMITMENT FOR COMMERCIAL AIR SUPPORT BY THAI FIRMS.
KINTNER

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED CINCPAC, USSAG.

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NNN

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